IIS 222.

SIMPLICITY NOT THE FIRST NOR THE LAST THING IN POINT OF TIME.—In the history of religious ideas many errors about development and false gradations are made in matters which in reality are not consecutive outgrowths but contemporary yet separate phenomena. In particular, simplicity has still far too much the reputation of being the oldest, the initial thing. Much that is human arises by subtraction and division, and not merely by doubling, addition, and unification.—For instance, men still believe in a gradual development of the idea of God from those unwieldy stones and blocks of wood up to the highest forms of anthropomorphism. Yet the fact is that so long as divinity was attributed to and felt in trees, logs of wood, stones, and beasts, people shrank from humanising their forms as from an act of godlessness. First of all, poets, apart from all considerations of cult and the ban of religious shame, have had to make the inner imagination of man accustomed and compliant to this notion. Wherever more pious periods and phases of thought gained the upper hand, this liberating influence of poets fell into the background, and sanctity remained, after as before, on the side of the monstrous, uncanny, quite peculiarly inhuman. And then, much of what the inner imagination ventures to picture to itself would exert a painful influence if externally and corporeally represented. The inner eye is far bolder and more shameless than the outer (whence the well-known difficulty and, to some extent, impossibility, of